

ABSOLUTE BATMAN™



ALL IN

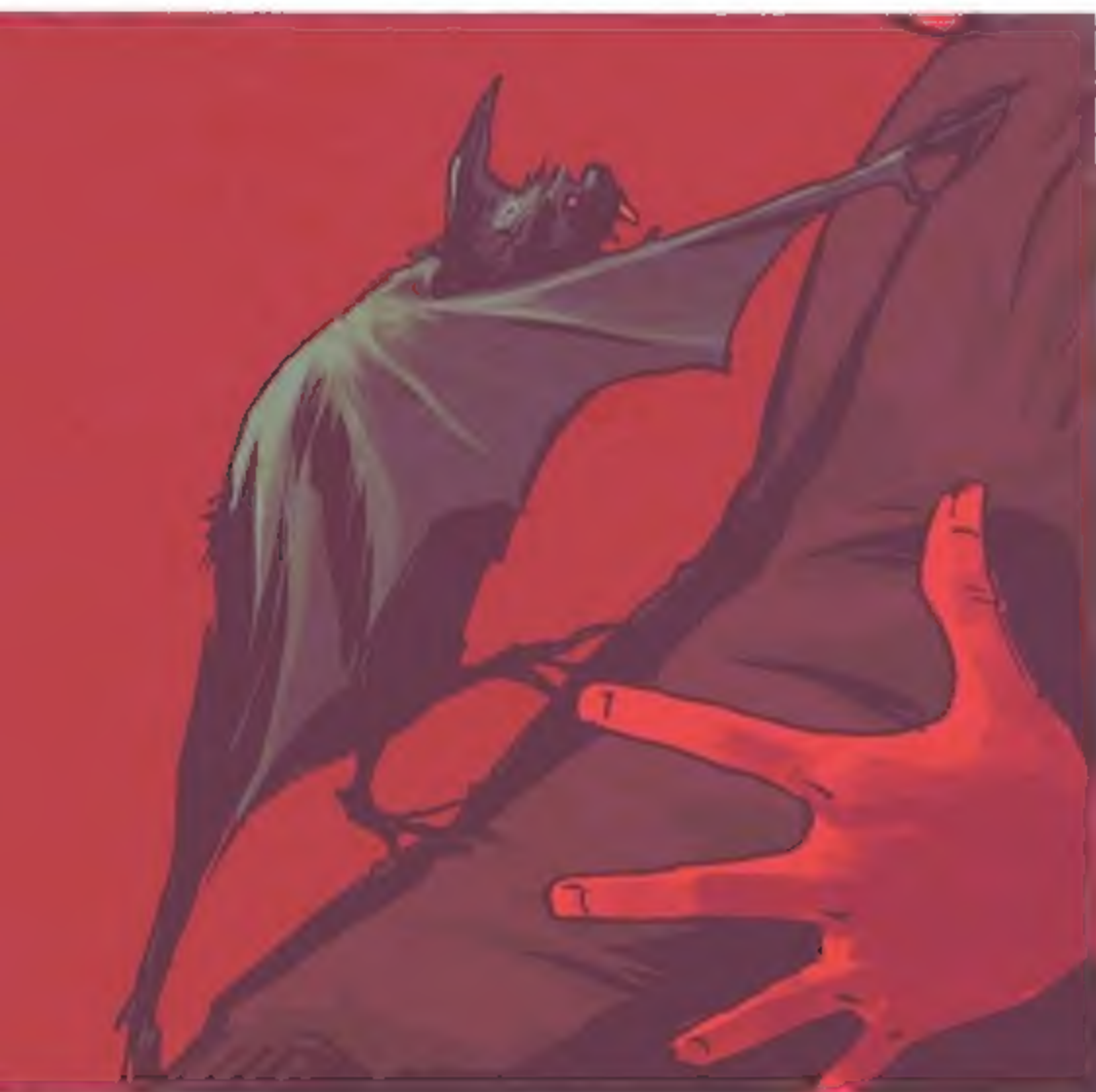
13+
TEEN

2



SNYDER
DRAGOTTA
MARTIN

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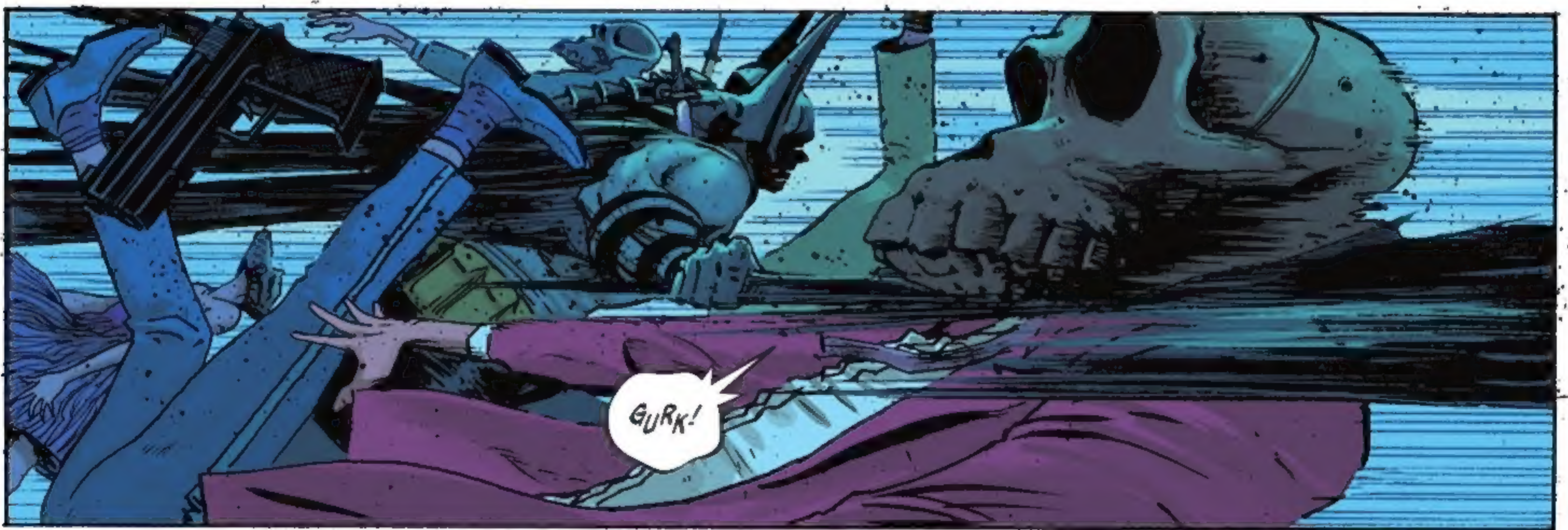




ABSOLUTE
BATMAN

"THE ZOO"

PART TWO
OF FIVE





Lately, Sionis has brought in more of them--his Party Animals.

--DEAD NOW, @#%--

--CARVE YOU--

Enough to take on a small militia.

When I was in Special Forces, my commanders always said what makes a great leader is knowing when to advance forward and when to retreat and regroup.



Campaigns are long. One AF, one RR.



Every battle, I think this one, this is where he'll realize it's time to retreat and regroup.

And yet...



RAHH!



SPLOOSH



...he plans everything.



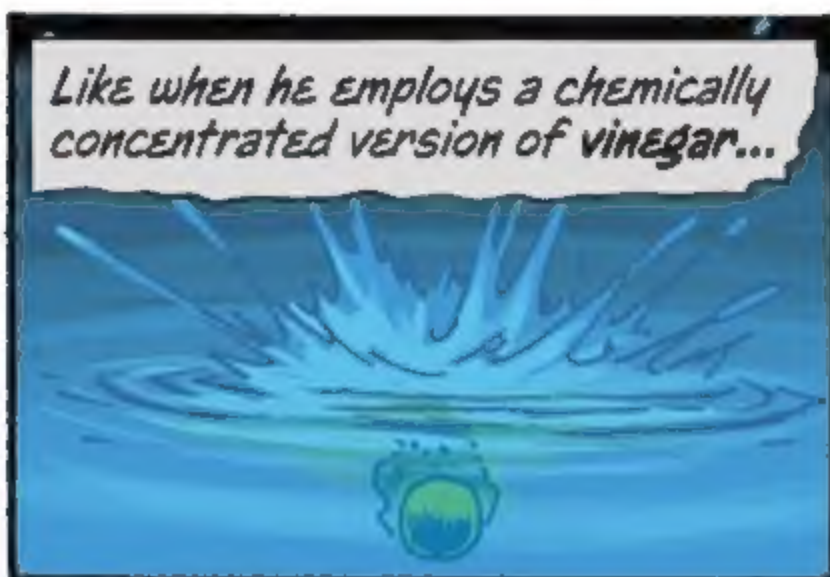
Uses everything.



A fighter who knows the terrain takes advantage.

HA! WOW. YOU GOT US WET--

CAN'T STAY UP THERE FOREVER--



Like when he employs a chemically concentrated version of vinegar...



...to turn the salt water into hydrochloric acid.



PLEASE! IT BUURNS--

@#% TOES ARE GONE--



HEH.



He has stash houses all over the city--not one but many. Caves.

I haven't been able to pinpoint more than a few.



But from his movements, I've plotted a line on which the others might be located.



YOU HAVE TO BE @#%& KIDDING ME.



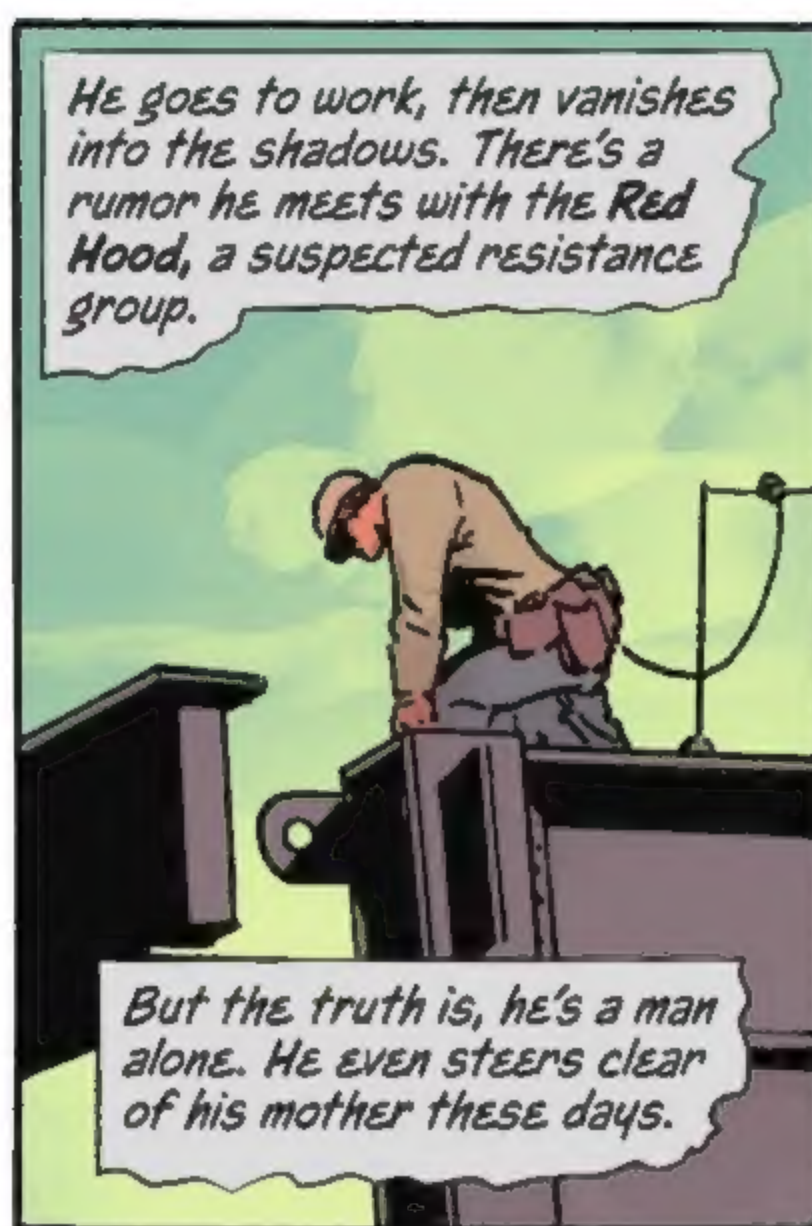
And if anything...



...he's certainly committed to the bit.



When he's not the Bat, his routine is monastically tight.



He goes to work, then vanishes into the shadows. There's a rumor he meets with the Red Hood, a suspected resistance group.

But the truth is, he's a man alone. He even steers clear of his mother these days.

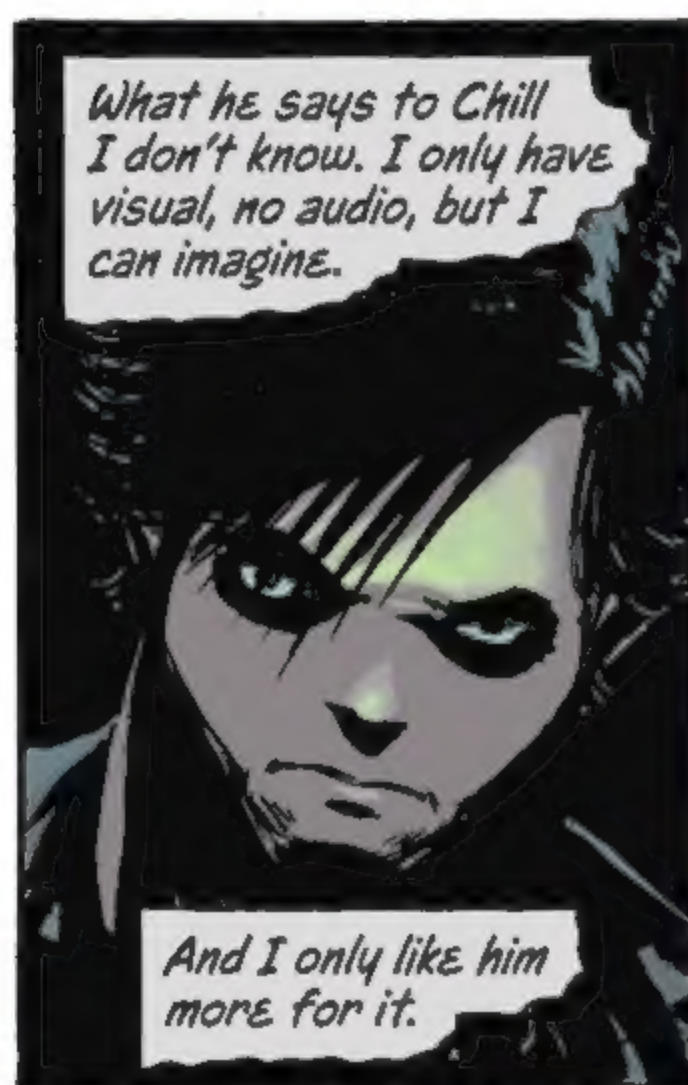


He breaks from routine only once during these weeks.

To make a stop that catches me off guard.



To visit Joseph Chill. His father's killer.



What he says to Chill I don't know. I only have visual, no audio, but I can imagine.

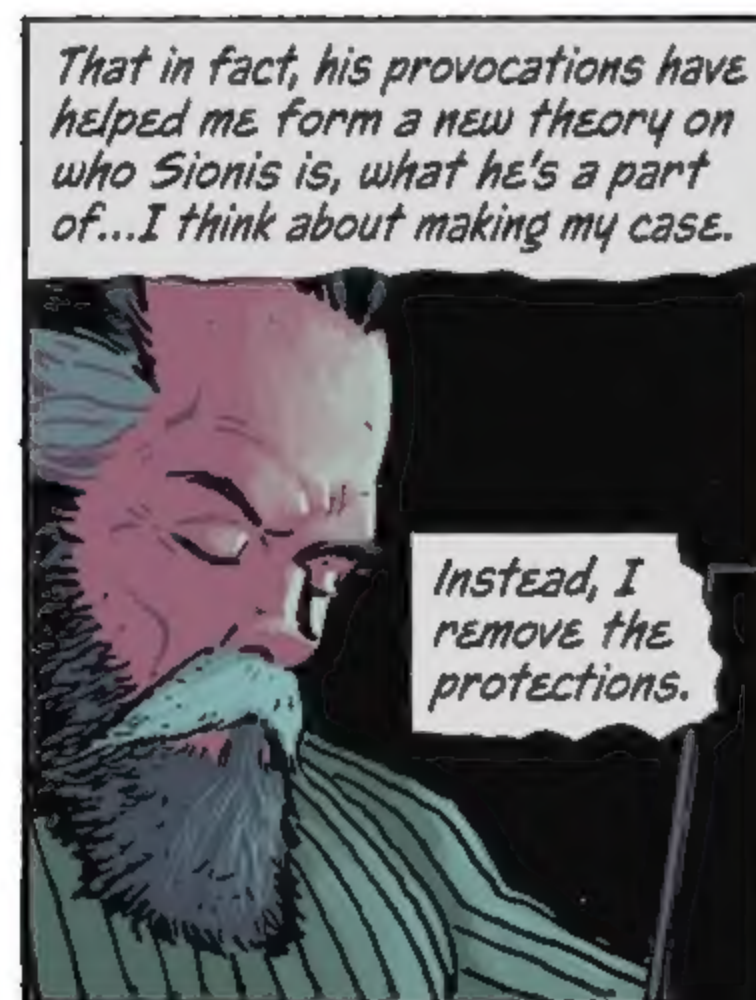
And I only like him more for it.



Another week in, my handler tells me I have to drop protections from Batman. They say he's become too volatile a factor.



I consider pushing back, telling him that Batman has helped my mission.



That in fact, his provocations have helped me form a new theory on who Sionis is, what he's a part of...I think about making my case.

Instead, I remove the protections.



Soon after, the Party Animals find his caves in the empty high-rises, as I did.



I try to picture Bruce up there. At the moment he finally understands.

When he SEES...



...and gets the message. "Retreat and Regroup, Batman. R #\$\$\$ R."



Batman
AF.



DESPITE RISING VIOLENCE, THE POLL FOUND SURPRISING SUPPORT FOR THE BATMAN.

WHAT'S YOUR RESPONSE TO THAT, FORMER MAYOR HILL?



YOU'RE LOOKING AT IT, JUSTINE. MEANING IT'S WHY I'M RUNNING AGAIN.

CRIME HAS GOTTEN SO BAD UNDER MAYOR GORDON THAT PEOPLE ARE LOOKING TO AN ACTUAL CRIMINAL FOR HELP. THINK ABOUT THAT.



WHEN THERE'S NO GOOD LEFT, THE CHOICE BECOMES THE LESSER OF ALL EVILS.

UNDERSTOOD. STILL, WE'D BE REMISS IF WE DIDN'T ASK YOU, MAYOR HILL, ABOUT SOME OF THE LINGERING CORRUPTION CHARGES...



TURN IT OFF, WILL YOU, BULLOCK? *COUGH*



SURE, JIMMY. I JUST THOUGHT YOU'D WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON. FULL DISCLOSURE, I PUT IN A REQUEST TO STATE FOR FOUR RVs. PLUS AN MD FOR COVERAGE.

FOUR AND AIR? YOU AND I BOTH KNOW MORE GUNS DOESN'T ALWAYS EQUAL MORE WINNING.



YEAH, WELL, MAYBE WE DIDN'T USE *ENOUGH* OVER THERE. EITHER WAY, WE NEED TO TAKE HIM DOWN, FAST.



"HIM"? YOU MEAN BATMAN? SHOULDN'T THE FOCUS BE THE PARTY ANIMALS?



THEY'RE UPPING BECAUSE *HE'S* UPPING.



YOU *DO* REMEMBER WHEN HE SAVED YOUR LIFE, RIGHT? AND MINE, AND DAD'S...



BARB, FOR ALL WE KNOW HE'S ON THEIR SIDE. SOME KIND OF SECRET @#\$% PARTNER, TRYING TO MAKE US LOOK BAD.

THEN WHY'S HE CALLING IN *TIPS* TO CENTRAL AS TO WHERE THEY'LL HIT NEXT? WHY'S HE *FIGHTING* THEM?



I'M *SO* NOT SORRY TO INTERRUPT, BUT...



...COME
HERE, YOU.

HOW'S HE
DOING?



I'M
FINE, JUST A
LITTLE--



AH, BUT
I WASN'T ASKING
YOU. BABS?

THEY GOT HIM
BAD, MARTHA. HE
NEEDS REST.



NOT
THAT HE'LL
LISTEN.



BULLOCK.

CALM
DOWN.
THEY HIT
WHAT?



THE PARTY ANIMALS
ARE TEARING UP THE
PORT AUTHORITY.

COME
ON.

BE
CAREFUL.



REST,
DUMMY.

DO I
HAVE A
CHOICE?



SHE'S
A GOOD
KID.

TOO
GOOD.



WHAT IS
THIS WORLD WE'VE
GIVEN THEM, MARZ WHEN
WE WERE THEIR AGE, WE
WERE CRAZY, SURE, THINKING
WE COULD CHANGE IT ALL.
BUT IT STILL FELT POSSIBLE
THEN, YOU KNOW?



YEAH,
WELL....



...I GUESS THEY'LL JUST HAVE TO BE EVEN **CRAZIER** THAN WE WERE.



YOU ALMOST SOUND LIKE THOMAS.



DON'T I KNOW IT.



GOD, I MISS HIM, JIMMY. IT'S FUNNY. I ACTUALLY THINK HE WOULD'VE LIKED BATMAN...



I LIKE HIM. BUT **NOW** I LIKE YOU BETTER.



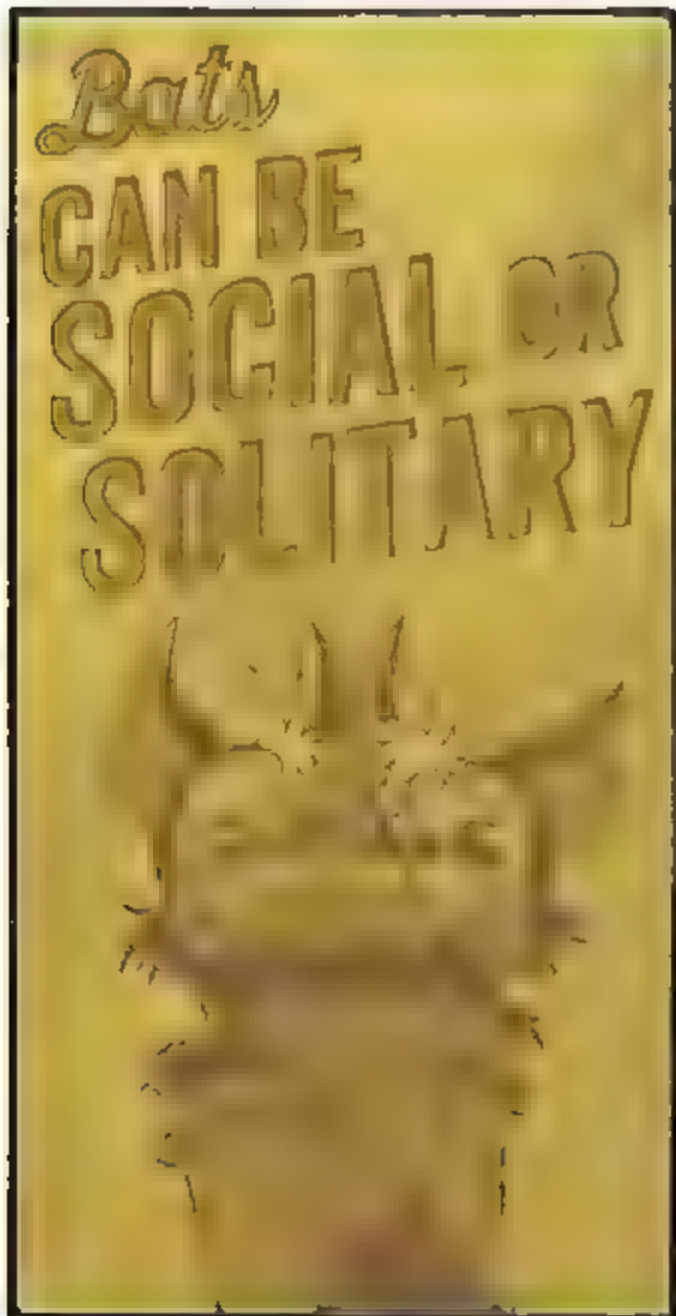
PATTY QUIT, YOU KNOW. MY DEPUTY MAYOR. ANY RE-ELECTION FEELS LIKE A **PIPE DREAM**.



LET'S BE HONEST, YOUR WHOLE **MAYORSHIP** HAS BEEN A PIPE DREAM.
BUT HEY, PIPE DREAMS ARE GOOD.



HEH. FAIR ENOUGH.
YOU KNOW I STILL THINK ABOUT IT EVERY DAY, MAR.
WHEN I FOUND HIM...



"...I DIDN'T SEE HIM AT FIRST.



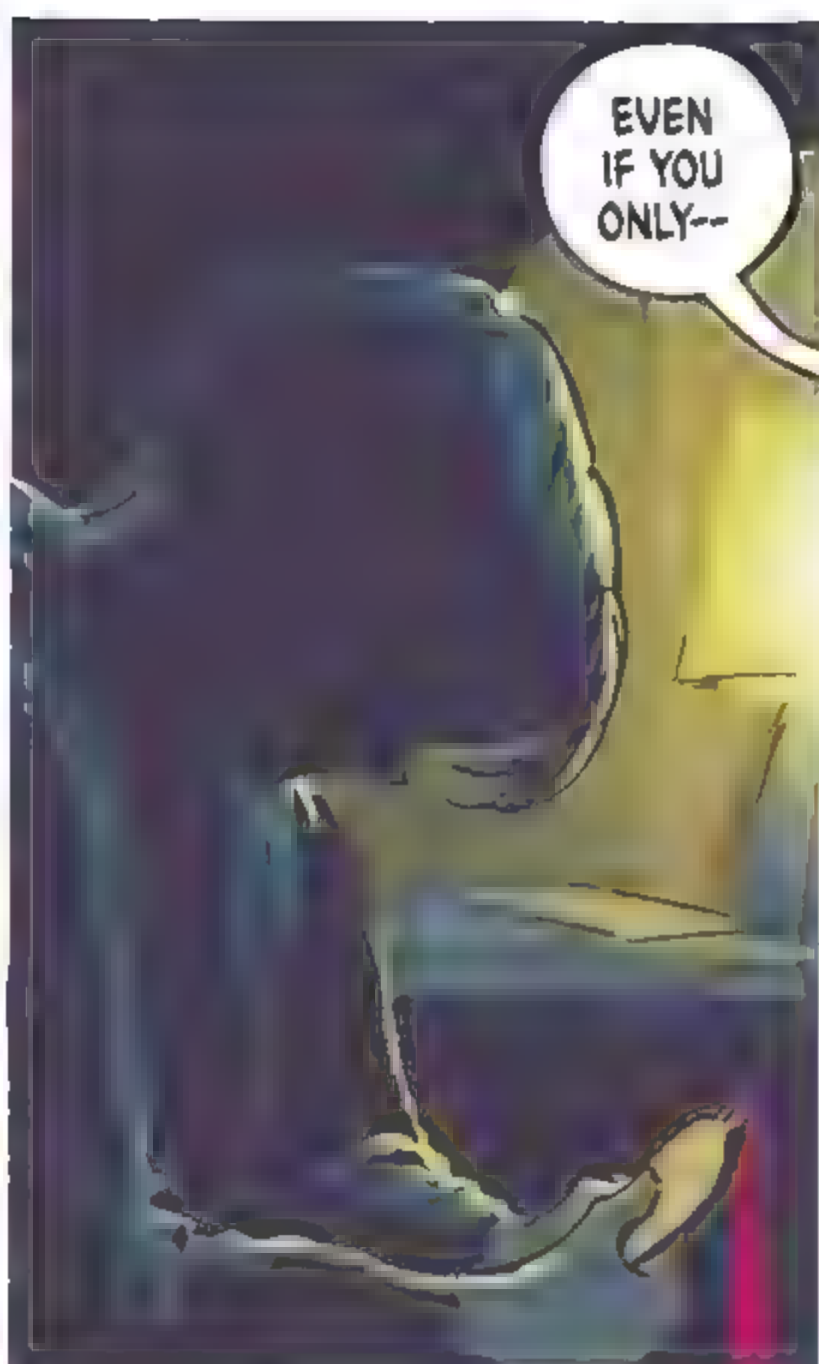
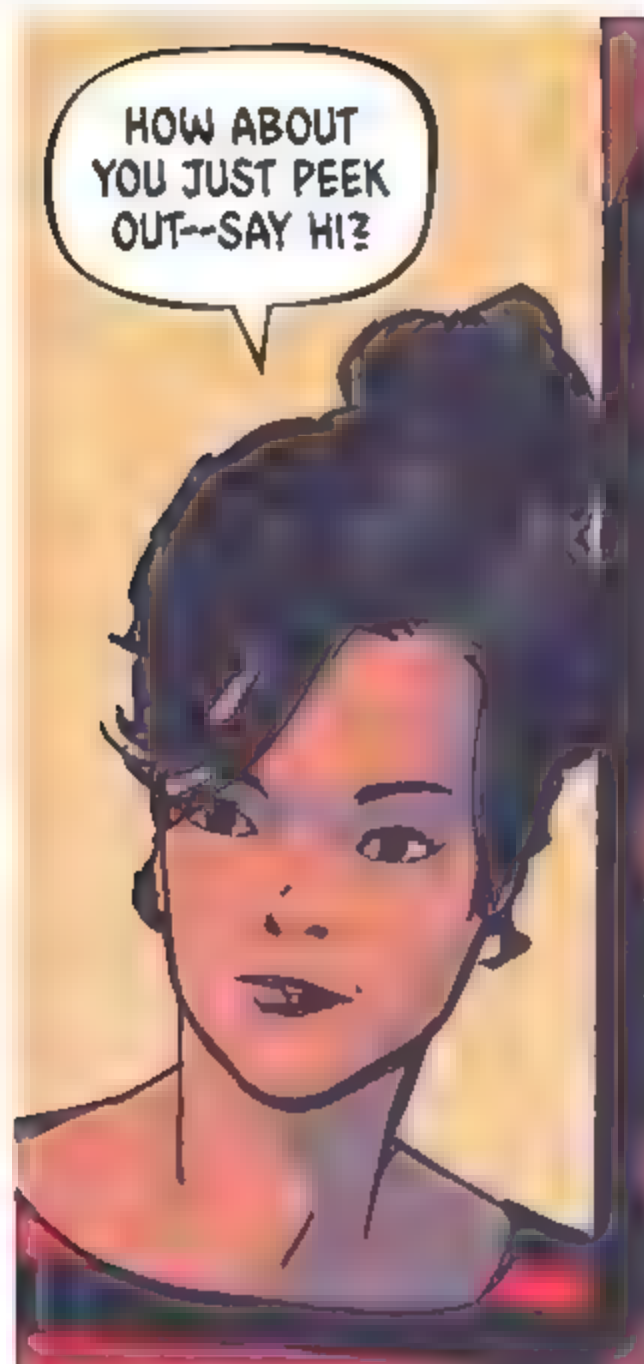
"DIDN'T EVEN KNOW HE WAS THERE.



"UNTIL HE **SCREAMED**.

"THAT SCREAM..."







--LOOK
WHAT THE
CAT DRAGGED
IN--

--NO
WAY--

--COULD
IT ACTUALLY
BE--?!



GRACING US
WITH YOUR #&\$%&
PRESENCE?

LAY
OFF. I'VE BEEN
BUSY.

HANG ON.
I'M MEMORIALIZING
THIS.



WHOA.
NO PICS.

WHAT, YOU'RE
TOO GOOD FOR
US NOW THAT YOU
PUSH PAPERS FOR
THE D.A.?



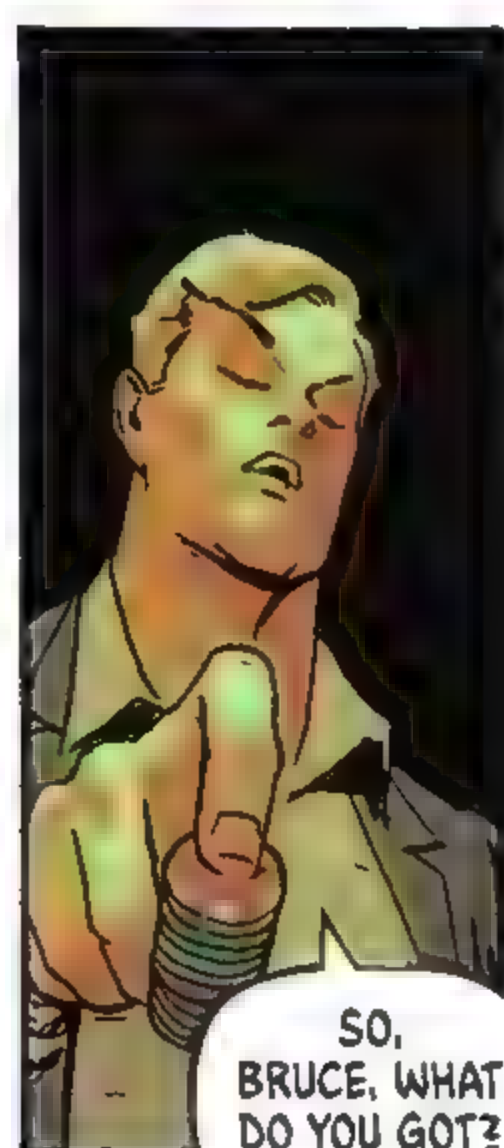
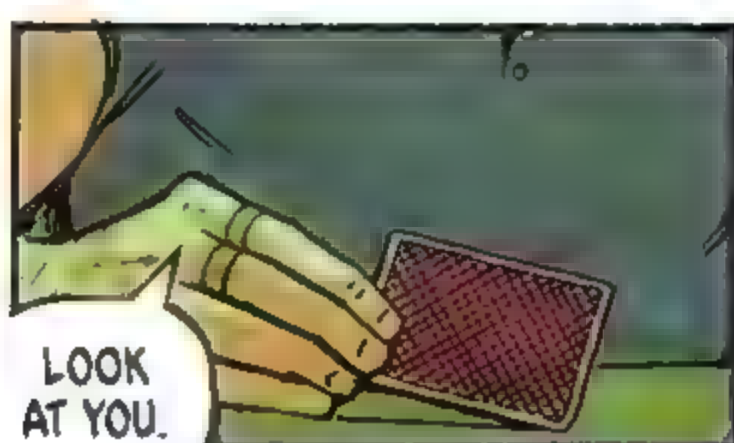
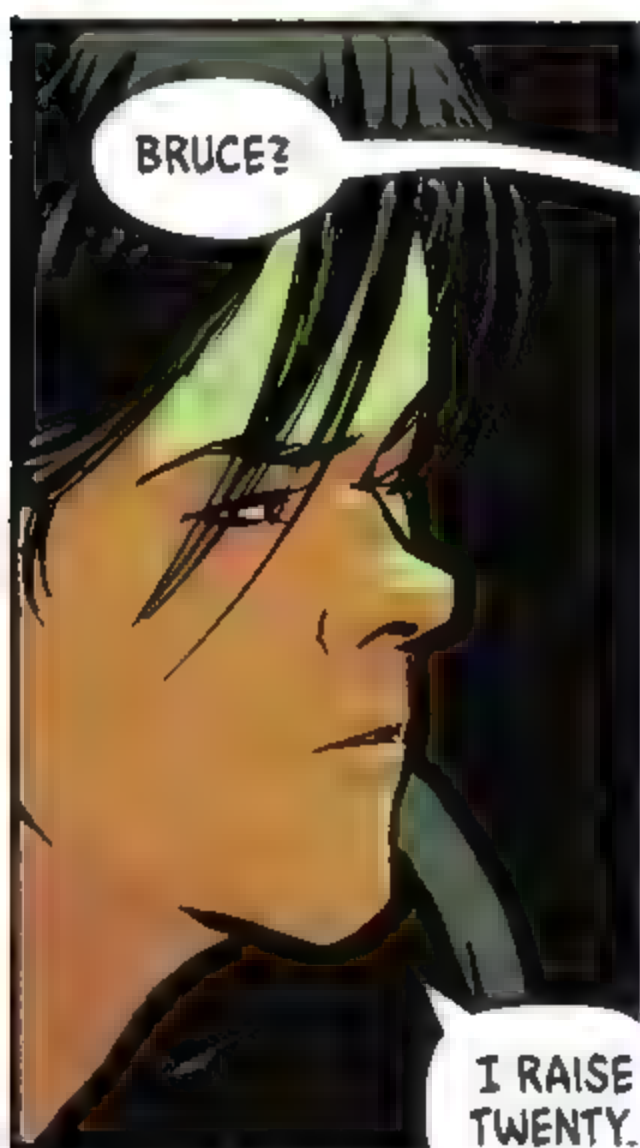
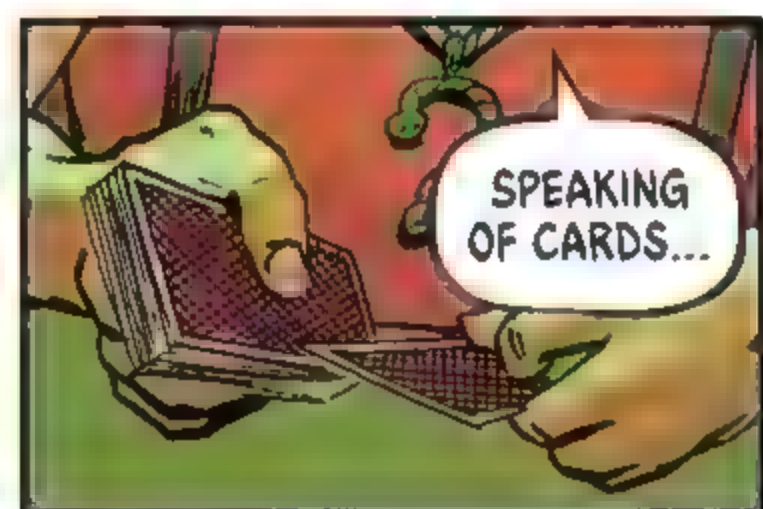
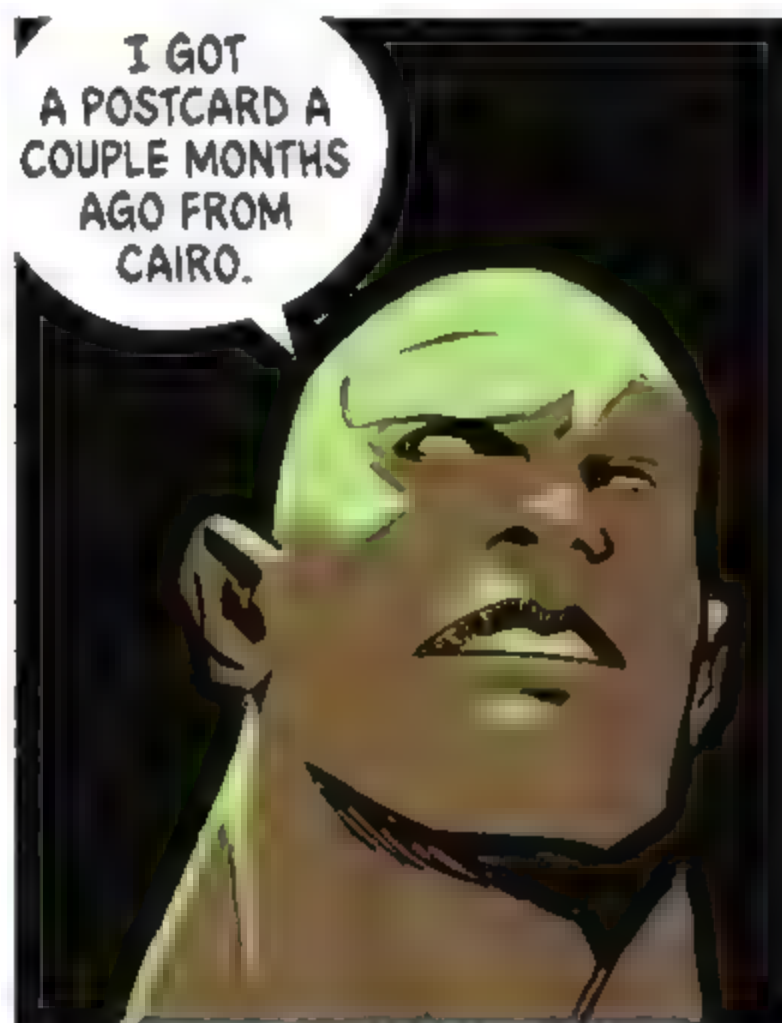
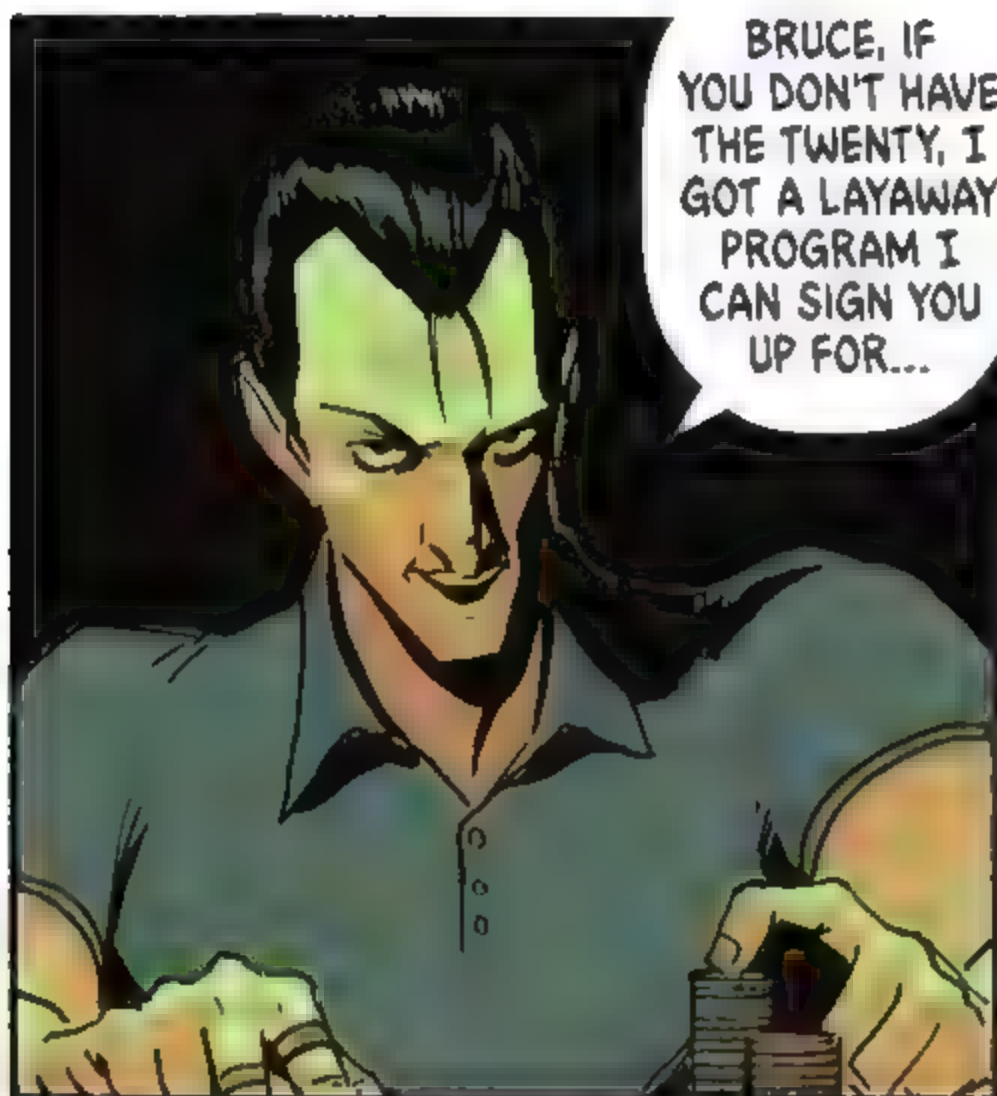
NOT TOO
GOOD FOR
THEM, OZZIE.
JUST YOU.

HAR HAR,
YOU @#&
TWO-FACE.



BRUCE, WILL
YOU *PLEASE* SHUT
THESE TWO UP SO
I CAN GO BACK
TO COUNTING
CARDS?







HOW ABOUT THIS?



WHAT THE--

WHERE THE #\$\$%& DID YOU GET THAT THING, MAN?

I FOUND IT. I'M HEADING THE REPAIR CREW AT CITY HALL.



GET IT OUT OF HERE.

SECONDED. NO MONKEY BONES IN THE POT.

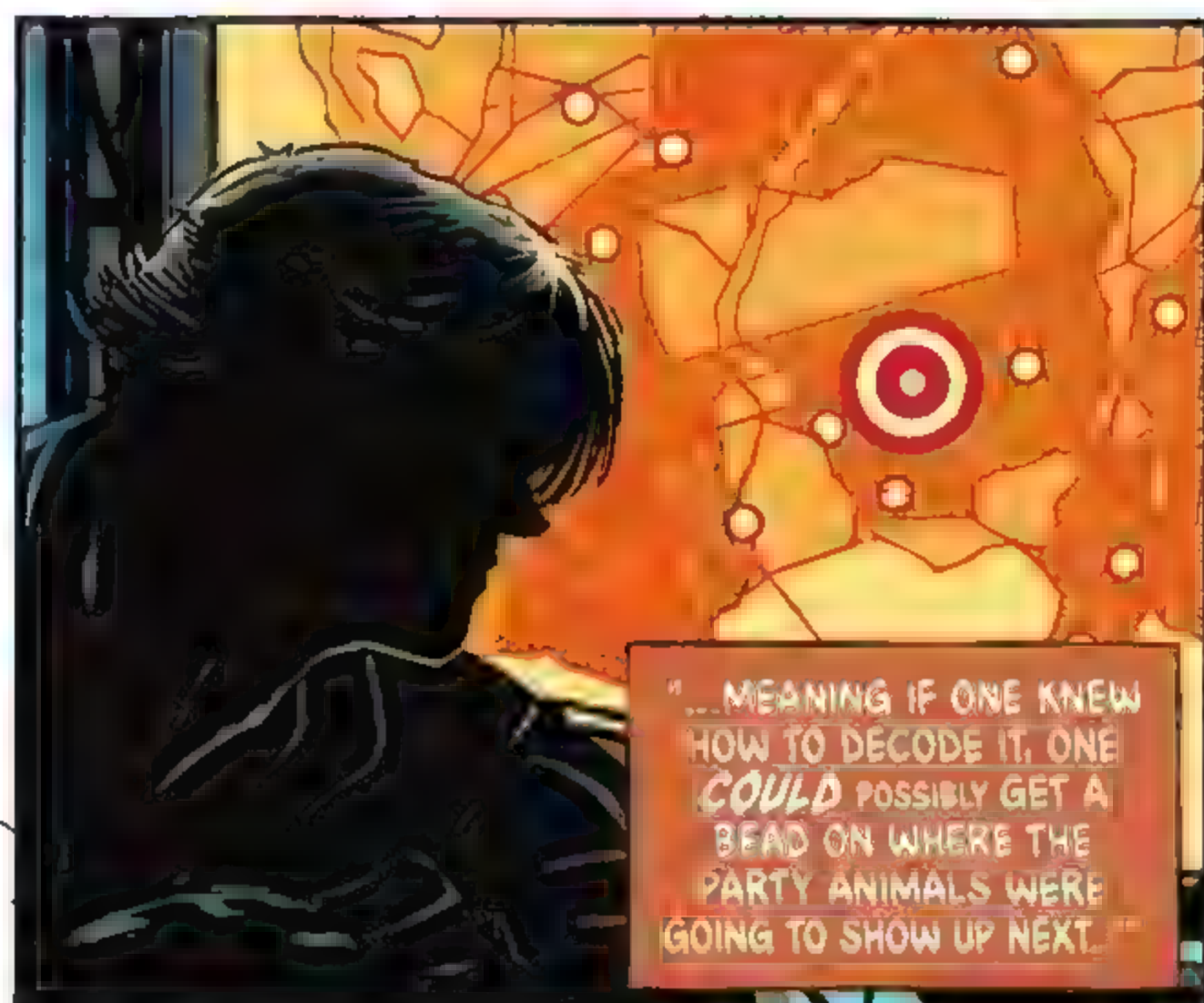
IT'S NOT ACTUALLY AN APE SKULL. TAKE A LOOK AT THE WIRING.



HUH. HE'S RIGHT. I SEE FOUR DIFFERENT CHIPS JUST IN THE OUTER WEAVE. THAT ONE LOOKS LIKE A G.I.S.



IT'S A GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEM, OZZIE. IT MAPS SHARED TARGETS ONTO A PRIVATE GPS NETWORK. ASSIGNS DIFFERENT VALUES.



... MEANING IF ONE KNEW HOW TO DECODE IT, ONE **COULD** POSSIBLY GET A BEAD ON WHERE THE PARTY ANIMALS WERE GOING TO SHOW UP NEXT.



...BUT THESE OTHER CHIPS...WOW. THIS IS ACTUALLY PREMIER.

MORE PREMIER THAN WHAT YOU DO?



WHOOOA THERE, BIG GUY. THEM'S FIGHTING WORDS.

SO, I'LL BE BORROWING THIS.

HIGH-TECH, HEAVILY ARMED. THE PARTY ANIMALS MUST BE MOVING IN ON EVERYONE'S TERRITORY...

OZZIE?

WHY THE @#\$\$% WOULD I KNOW, BRUCE? JUST BECAUSE MY BUSINESS IS ATYPICAL, YOU THINK--

RELAX. I WAS JUST ASKING IF YOU'RE STILL IN.

...OH.

"ATYPICAL." THAT'S GOOD.

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, THE PARTY ANIMALS AREN'T MOVING IN ON *ANYTHING*. FAR AS I CAN TELL, THESE GUYS ARE JUST OUT TO WRECK THE CITY.

WORD IS, THEIR MAN? "ROMAN"? HE KILLS EVERYONE WHO MEETS AND TRIES TO MAKE A DEAL.

AND YEAH, I'M OUT.

EDDIE?

NAH, I GOT KINGS COMING MY WAY NEXT HAND.

WAYLON?

PFFT.

I'M OUT, TOO

I WILL SAY, IT'S NICE TO SEE YOU SO FIRED UP, BRUCE.

ALL RIGHT, HARV. YOU AND ME.

I GOT TO ASK, THOUGH.

YOU'RE DEEP IN. YOU THINK IT'S POLITICAL? THE PARTY ANIMALS CAUSING HAVOC THIS CLOSE TO AN ELECTION? YOU THINK IT'S TO SINK GORDON?

NAH, WE ALL LOVE JIM, BUT HE WAS HURTING BEFORE ALL THE CHAOS. IT'D BE OVERKILL, LITERALLY AND FIGURATIVELY.

MY TWO CENTS? IF THIS IS POLITICAL, IT'S ABOUT MORE THAN JUST POWER.

WHAT'S A BIGGER MOTIVATOR THAN *POWER*?

HA. SPOKEN LIKE A TRUE CRIME ALLEY BOY...

...*MONEY*, BROTHER. THE SOURCE. THE CHICKEN AND THE EGG BOTH.

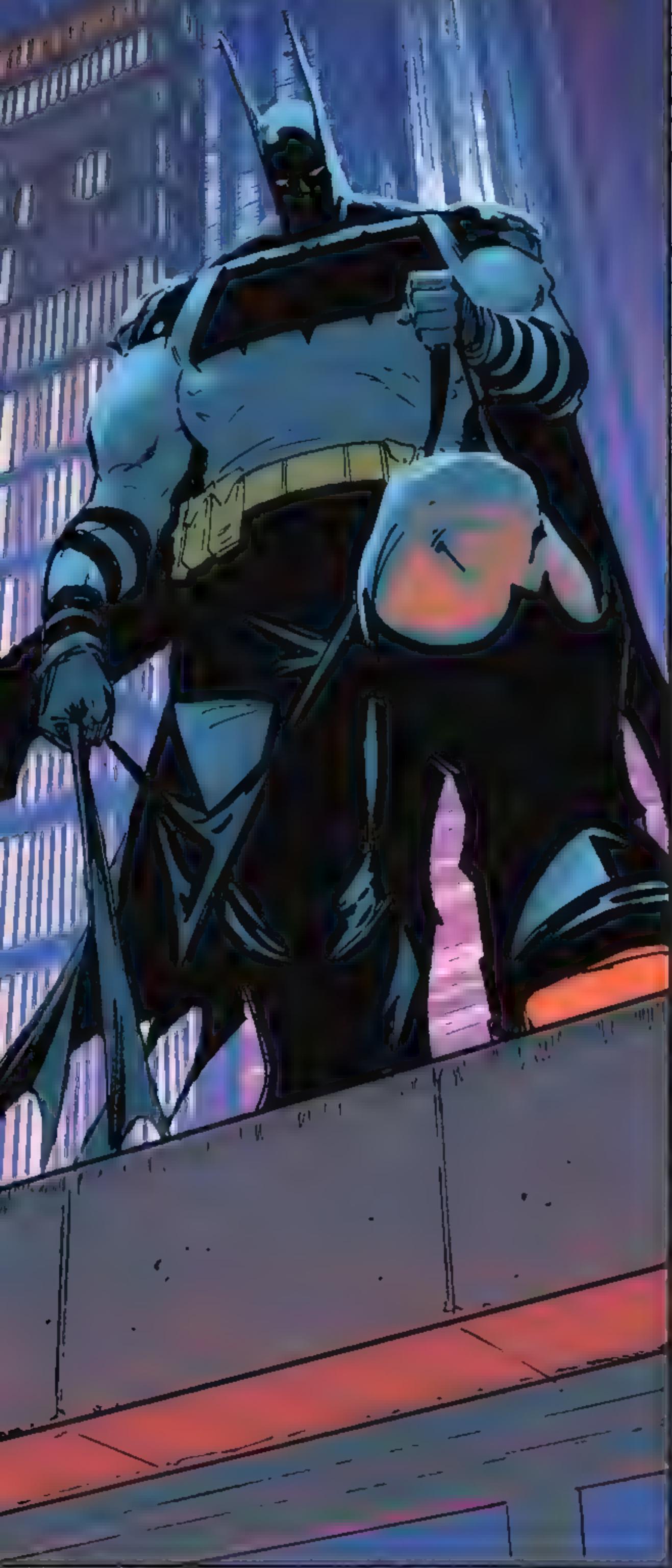
SPEAKING OF WHICH...TWO PAIR. YOU?

THREE ACES...

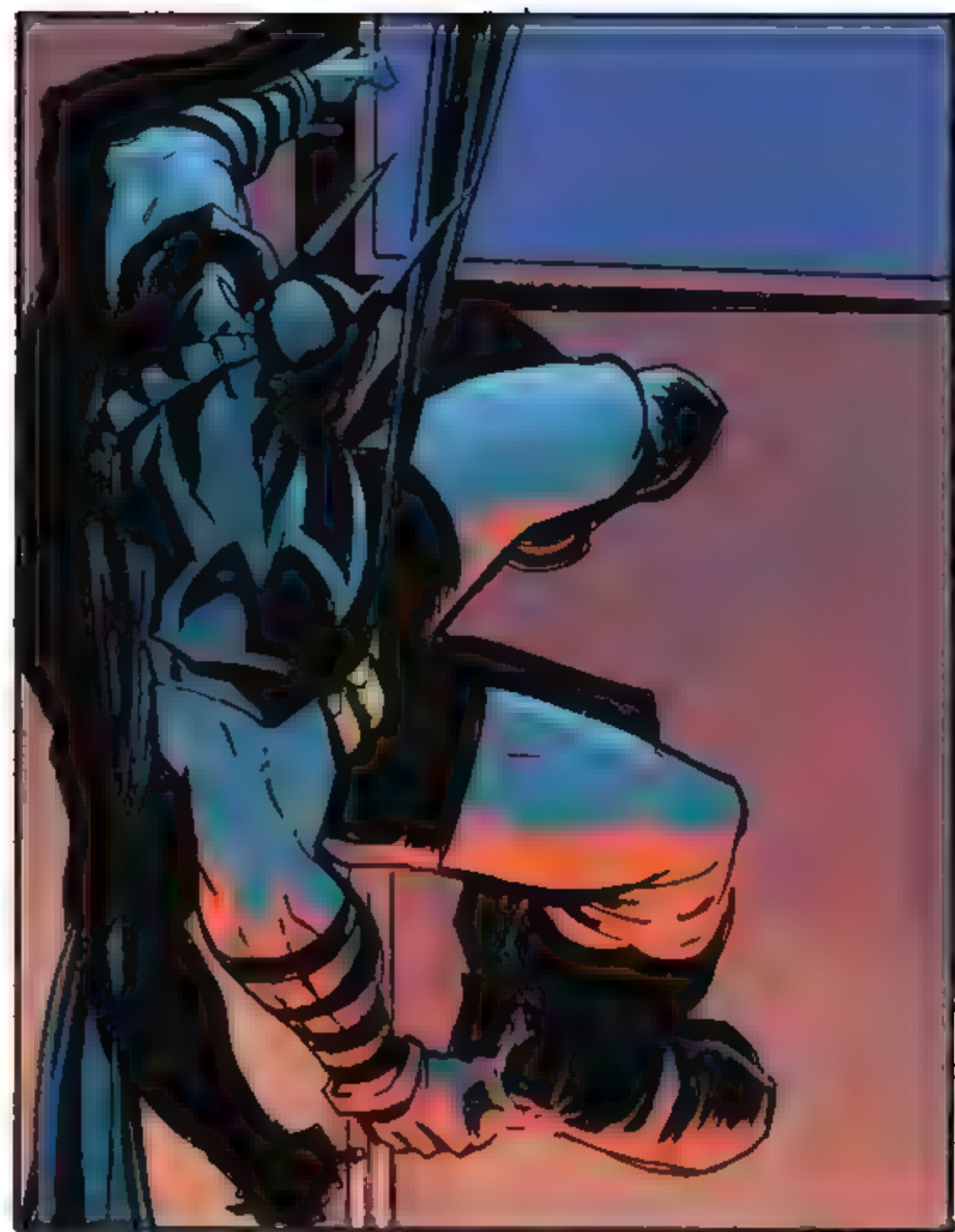
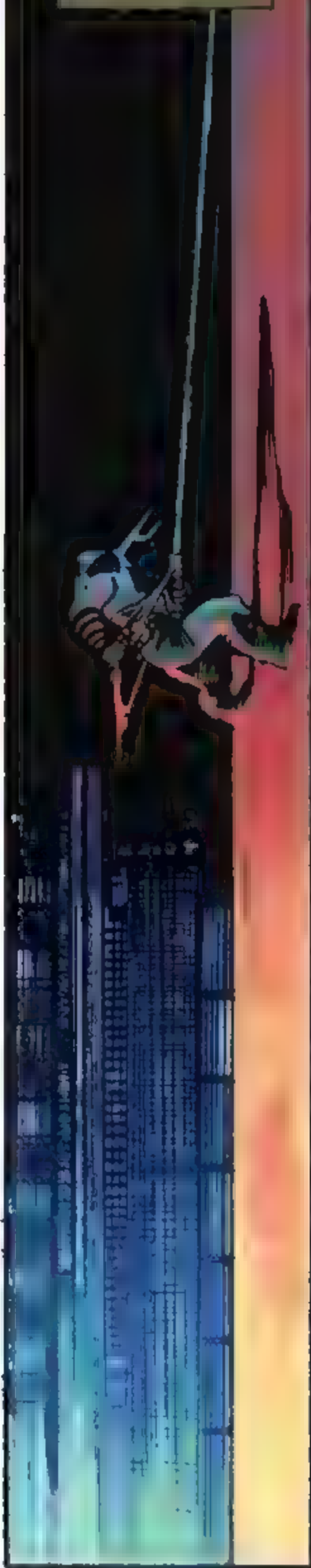
...FOUR IF WE'RE PLAYING WITH *JOKERS*.

JOKERS ARE NEVER WELCOME HERE, BRUCE...

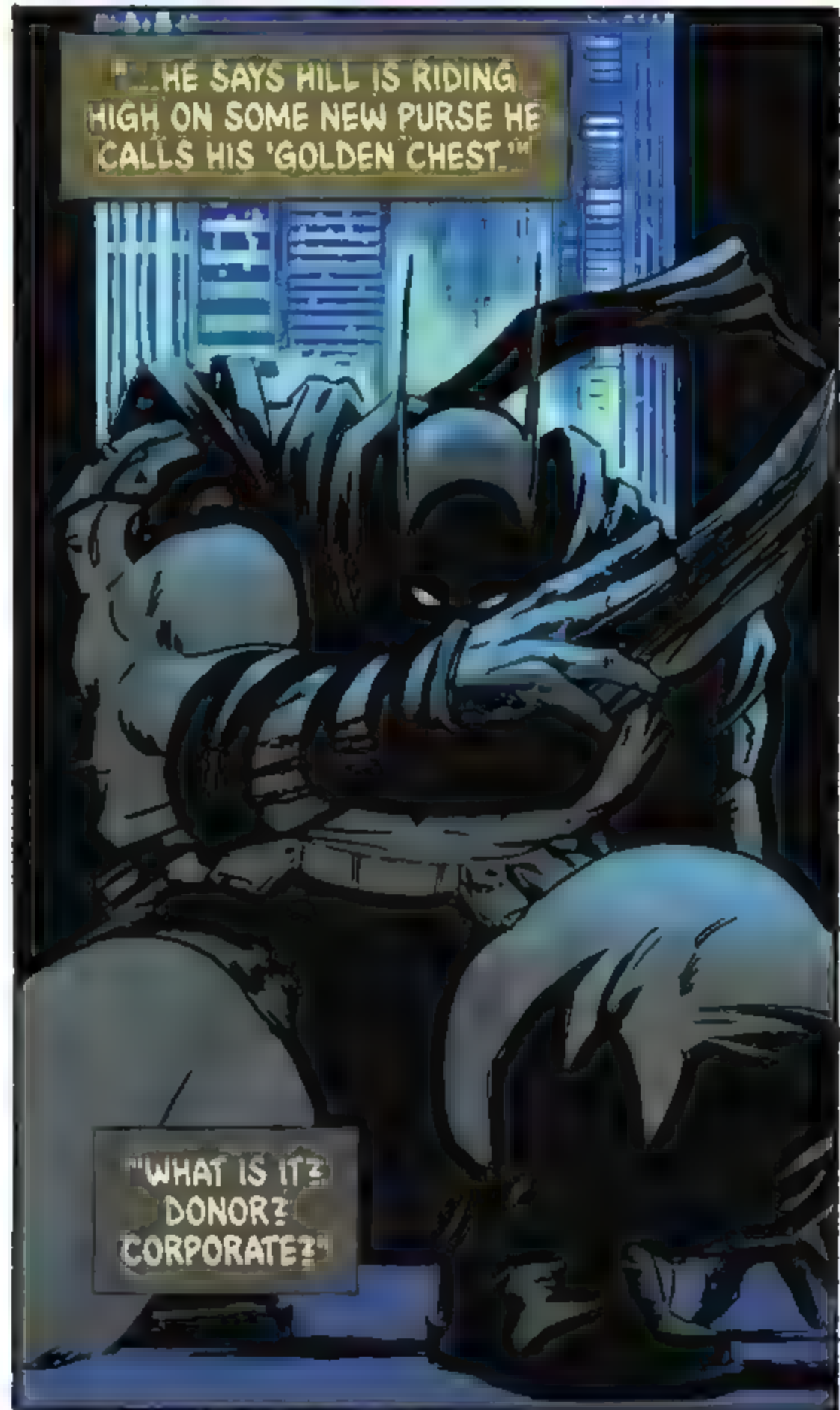
"...SHOULDA NEVER LET YOU IN ON THE POT. AND LOOK, I DONT KNOW IF IT HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE PARTY ANIMALS. BUT FROM WHAT I HEAR IN THE HALLS, HILL HAS BEEN TAKING IN A LOT OF CAPITAL.



"LIKE, A LOT. THIS GUY I KNOW WHO WORKS IN HIS OFFICE. YOUNG GUY NAMED HADY-- SCUMBAG. BUT STILL...

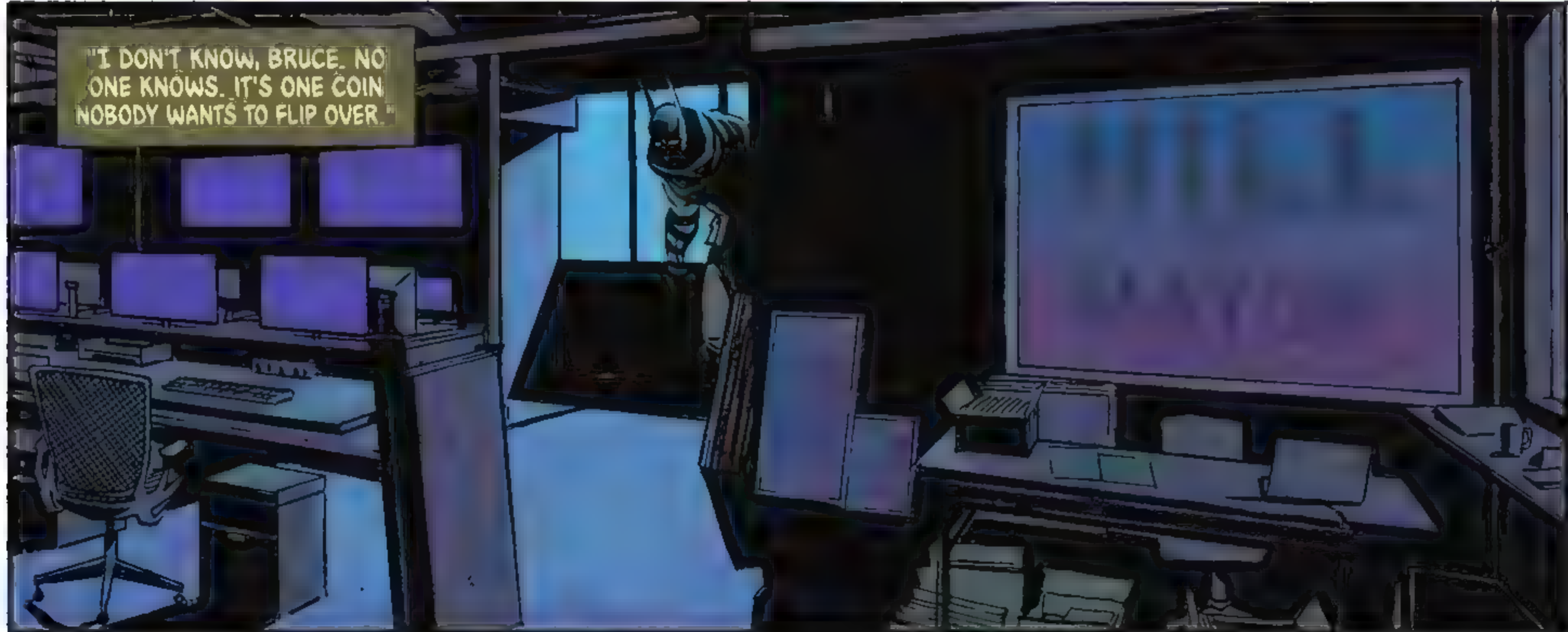


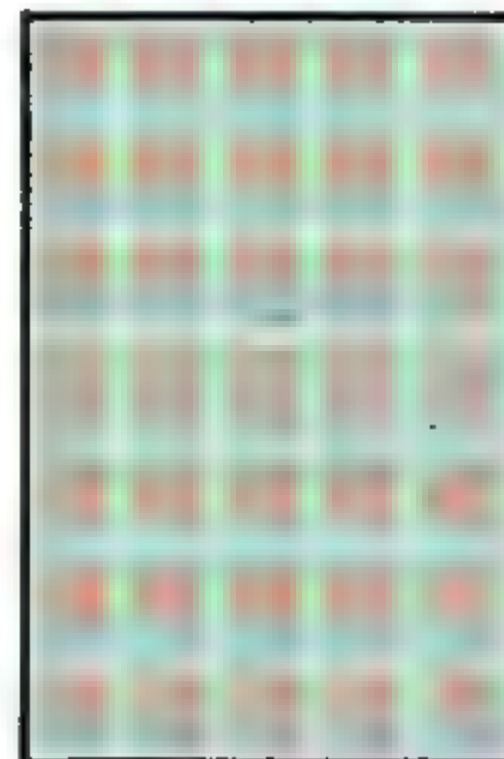
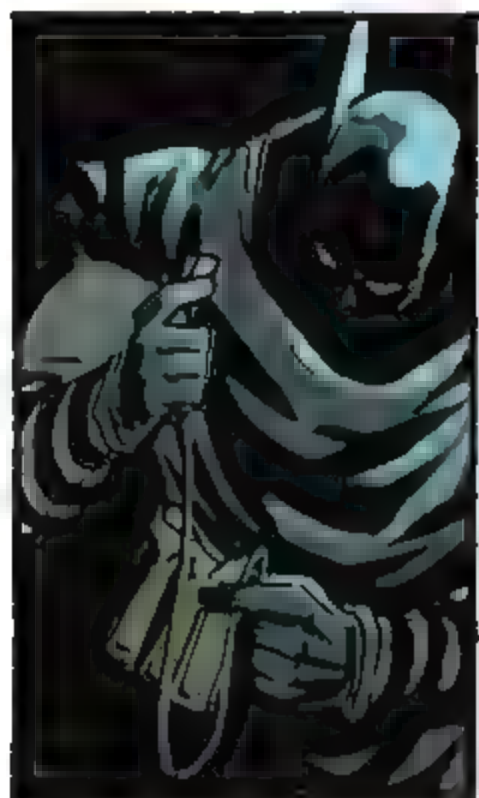
"...HE SAYS HILL IS RIDING HIGH ON SOME NEW PURSE HE CALLS HIS 'GOLDEN CHEST'."



"WHAT IS IT? DONOR? CORPORATE?"

"I DON'T KNOW, BRUCE. NO ONE KNOWS. IT'S ONE COIN NOBODY WANTS TO FLIP OVER."







WELL,
HELLO
THERE!

FINALLY,
BATMAN, WE
MEET! NOW,
UNFORTUNATELY, WE
DON'T HAVE MUCH
TIME TO CHAT.



I LIKE YOU,
I DO. YOU'RE MY KIND
OF PARTY. SO I'LL MAKE
YOU A DEAL. EVERYTHING
YOU'VE EVER WANTED.
BUT, FULL DISCLOSURE,
YOU ARE IN A BIT
OF A SPOT...



"WE DID TIP OFF THE
WHOLE GCPD..."

"...AND MY PEOPLE HAVE
THE BUILDING SURROUNDED.

"STILL, I'LL BE
WAITING ON
YOUR CALL."



ALL YOU HAVE
TO DO...

...IS
SURVIVE.



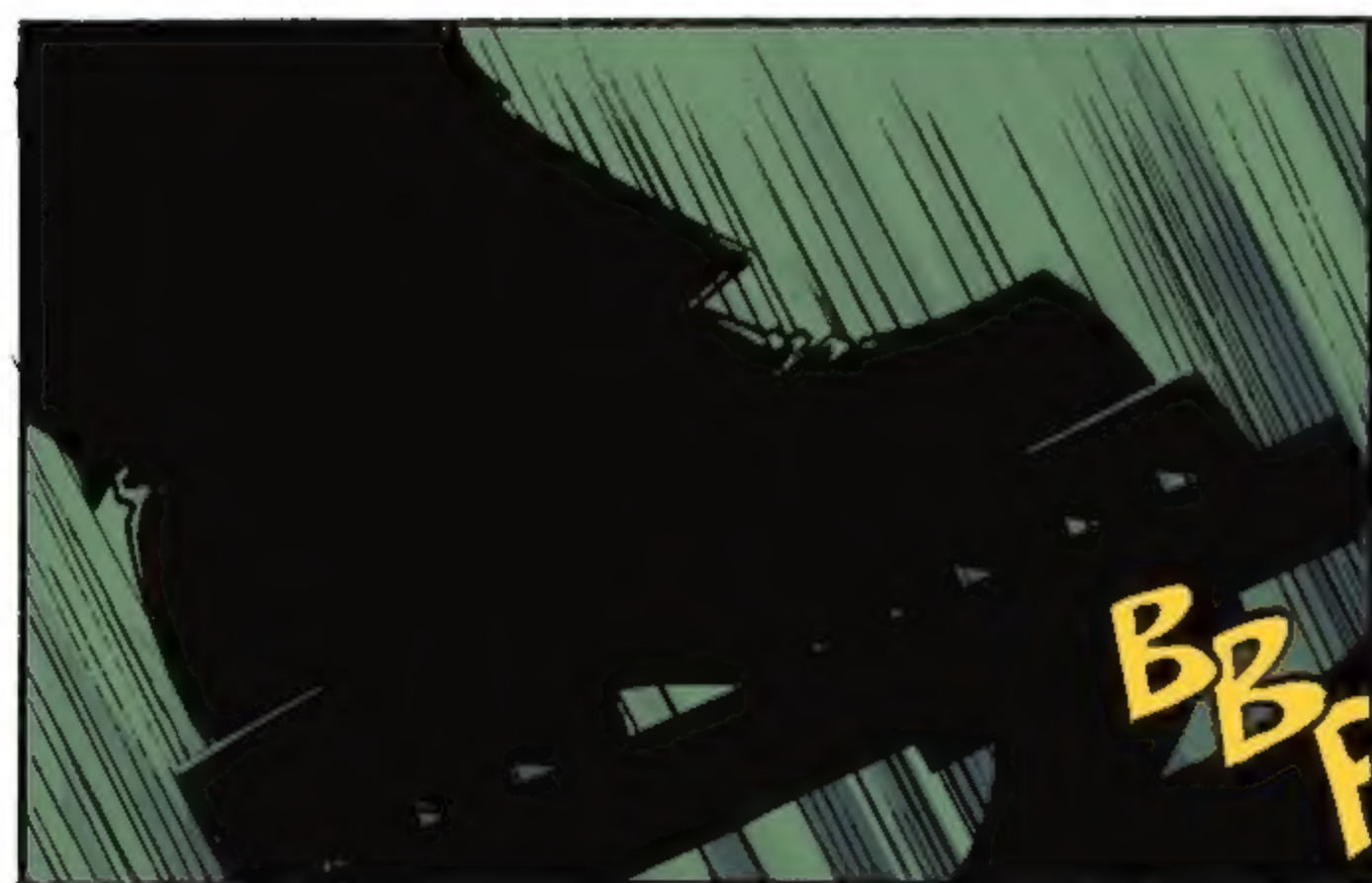


HEAR
ME OUT.



NO.

YOU'RE A
GOOD DETECTIVE,
KID, BUT I'VE LEARNED
SOME THINGS ABOUT
THEM--THE PARTY
ANIMALS. THEY'RE
NOT WHAT THEY
SEEM.







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